1: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1954 RR1 Siberia RR1

538 756 It would appear from Soviet evidence that Shamanism experienced a certain revival during the war. Shamans, it is alleged, cunningly used the temporary absence of young communist educated people from the tribal areas to regain some of their former influence. The novel of the well-known Soviet writer Azhaev, *Far from Moscow*, which refers to conditions in a Nanai village contains, for instance, the following passage: 'He (the Shaman) had lain low for a time but resumed his evil practices when war broke out. He saw his chance to profit from the war by a crafty and insolent device. Many of the Nanai boys of the village had been called to the colours. They wrote letters home from the front, and the Shaman made his "prophecies" by these letters. His clients were mostly old women anxious about the fate of their sons, and he fleeced and fooled them to the top of his bent.'[33]

Soviet novels about post-war conditions in the Far East try to convey the impression that the Shamans have ceased to be figures that are respected and feared. The Shamans of these novels are desperately isolated and universally despised. In one case the Shaman is even an enemy agent whom the Americans have sent from Alaska to provoke 'acts of diversion' among the natives of the Soviet Far East.

Some of the Soviet charges made against the Shamans coincide more or less with the criticism which a Western colonial administrator would direct against the African witch-doctors and juju-men. Western and Soviet administrators will, however, often differ as to the way in which the Shaman and the juju-man are to be fought. In West Africa, though not in East Africa, the fight against the juju-man is no more than a campaign of enlightenment in favour of a more hygienic way of life. In other words it is an aim in itself. The fight against the Shaman in the Soviet Far East and Far North is only a small part of a great struggle which is aimed at crushing every kind of political and religious opposition.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

747 ● 779 661 In the Far East and Far North the régime fights religion on 'two fronts'. If the liquidation of Shamanism is one aim of communist anti-religious policy, the total prevention of Christian missionary activities is another.

Christianity has had a certain influence on the small nationalities of the Far East. Missionaries preaching the faith in a God who loves and helps man, have tried with some success to oust from the hearts of the natives that deep-rooted fear which is accompanied by belief in evil spirits. But the work of the missionaries was far from being finished when the Soviet authorities interrupted it. As it often happens in Africa, the superstitions of paganism survived even where the Church made formal converts. Those Lamuts of Kamchatka, for instance, who accepted the

1: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1954 RR1 Siberia RR1

Christian faith, acquired Christian ikons, but did not want to part with their Shamanist idols. The same can be observed among other Far Eastern and Far Northern aborigines. Many Christian converts wear crosses around their necks, but, at the same time, have idols made of walrus bones and reindeer skin on their belts. Naturally the communists have thrown ridicule on this pagan-Christian dualism, which they have described as 'Shamanism-Orthodoxy', but it is an unavoidable transitory stage in the religious development of any primitive people. Certain sections of the northern tribes of Soviet Russia had been sufficiently Christianized at the time of the establishment of Soviet power to resent the forcible withdrawal of priests, and the removal from forests and ways of crosses which, in the popular belief gave protection against 'devils'. A protest lodged by a group of natives of the Beryozovo district in North-western Siberia was characteristic in this respect. The natives in question wrote a letter complaining that the local communist secretary did not allow them to have a priest. Their actual words were: We can't do without a priest because this is our faith.' ('My ne mozhem bez popa potomu chto vera nasha takaya'.) The letter of protest was printed in 1934 in *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, the official organ of the Soviet of Nationalities as a general illustration of the fact that priests still enjoyed confidence in certain parts of the Far North.*

Today most of the Far Eastern tribes are outside the reach of those reduced activities which are still permitted to the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.S.R. Whilst churches are tolerated in old towns where their existence is traditional, it has been the consistent policy of the Soviet Government not to allow Christian houses of worship to be erected in the so-called 'socialist cities' which are the products of the Soviet period. In the Far East this applies to Magadan and Komsomolsk, places which among their polyglot population count quite a number of detribalized natives. Members of the two larger nationalities of the Soviet Far East, Yakuts and Buryat-Mongols, are, as far as they are converts to Christianity, in a better position than the members of the smaller tribes. There are churches in the capitals of Yakutia and Buryat-Mongolia and presumably also in other localities of these Republics. These are under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Irkutsk and Chita, whose diocese is larger than the whole of Western Europe.

STALIN – THE SUN

Against Shamanism and Christianity the Soviet régime uses one and the same metaphysical antidote – the Lenin-Stalin cult. In the territories of the Far Eastern tribes this cult has a particularly colourful variant. It takes the form of folk-tales which depict Lenin and Stalin as 'super-

* *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, Nr 53, July 1934, pp. 51–57.